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THE

THREE LAST THINGS:

THE

RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,

THE

DAY OF JUDGMENT,

AND

FINAL RETRIBUTION.

BY REV. JOSEPH TRACY.

BOSTON:
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In this hope, this little work is sent forth. It aims to exhibit clearly, one of the many sufficient arguments by which an important truth is proved. If it shall be the means of persuading a single human soul to expect a Day of Judgment after death, and to prepare for it, the author will consider himself richly rewarded.

Boston, May 1, 1839.

CONTENTS.

Page.

ADVERTISEMENT. 5

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—THE SUBJECT STATED. . 9

CHAPTER II.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. . . 17

CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION AND GENERAL JUDGMENT. 35

CHAPTER IV.

THE SAME SUBJECTS CONTINUED. . . 52

CHAPTER V.

FINAL RETRIBUTION. 67

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE. 80

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION. 101

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—THE SUBJECT STATED.

WHY are not all men, at least in Christian lands, earnestly engaged in preparing for the "Three Last Things,"—the Resurrection, the Judgment, and Final Retribution? Doubtless, the love of this world, and the occupation of men's minds with worldly cares and pleasures, do much to make them forget what the Scriptures teach concerning futurity. The Judgment, Heaven and Hell make little impression, because men seldom think of them. "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." But could this be the case, if what the scriptures say of the Day of Judgment and the Retribution that is to

follow it, were apprehended as realities? It is not merely because these things are future, that they do not seize every mind with irresistible force. The affairs of tomorrow, of next week, and of next year, are future; and yet they occupy the minds of men and influence their conduct, even more than things that are present. Nor is it because the Judgment and its consequences are at a greater distance from us than worldly things. It is not true, that, among future things, those that are nearest, necessarily affect us most strongly. The young man subjects himself to study, and labor, and privation, during many of the first years of his life, that he may prepare for the years that shall follow. He deliberately consecrates the years that are nearest, to the work of preparing for those that are more remote. It is not, then, because the Judgment is future, or because it is more distant than some other events, that men neglect to prepare for it. It is rather because Judgment, Heaven and Hell are not indeed apprehended by them as realities. That their conduct

will have an influence on their condition in this life, they see and feel, and act accordingly. Its influence on their condition in another life does not appear so real to them, and they disregard it.

Some have even gone a step farther, and openly assert that this life is the only state of retribution; that we suffer here, all that we shall ever suffer for our sins, and that death will introduce us all into a state of unmingled felicity. Of course, they believe all solicitude and all preparation for judgment after death and retribution after judgment to be entirely useless. From those who live and die in this belief, nothing but neglect of spiritual things and consequent perdition can reasonably be expected. And of those who have not adopted this doctrine as their own, many are encouraged in neglect by their example, and many, by the thought that perhaps it may be true.

How shall this error be met? How shall men be convinced that they cannot safely neglect the salvation of their souls? A closer inspection of their belief may show us.

Those who hold that there will be no Retribution after death, very naturally hold that there will be no Day of Judgment after death; for of what use is judgment, if none are to be condemned; or condemnation, if none are to be punished? Judgment naturally precedes retribution. Of course, those who hold that this life is the only state of retribution, hold that every day is a day of judgment; or at least, that there are many days of judgment—days when God inflicts special chastisement—in this life. And if there is to be no general judgment, what need is there of a general resurrection? And when one arrives at this state of mind, it is very natural to think that the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body cannot be literally true; that the body, when once dead, is dead forever, and that only the soul survives.

Thus, the system that justifies the neglect of the soul, denies the Resurrection of the Body, the Day of Judgment, and Retribution after the Day of Judgment; and those who fully believe it, will tell how absurd it is, to

believe that there is a local and material hell, for the punishment of immaterial spirits. But probably, those who distinctly receive the entire system are but few. A far greater number deny that there will be any retribution after death, but whether there will be a general resurrection and a general judgment, they have not considered, or have considered slightly without deciding.

Such, it is believed, is the most prevalent form of the doctrine which encourages men to neglect preparation for another world. It does not deny that God will punish sinners; and therefore texts and arguments which merely prove that God will punish sinners, do not confute it. Its error is an error in respect to *time;* asserting that retribution is in this life, and not after a general resurrection and general judgment. It must be met, therefore, by an argument concerning the *time* of retribution. We must show that retribution will follow the Day of Judgment. But this will be insufficient; for we shall be told that God judges us every day that we live. We must,

therefore, fix the date of that Day of Judgment of which the Bible speaks. We must show that there will be a General Resurrection—not merely an existence of the soul after death—but a General Resurrection of the bodies of men, such as we know has not yet taken place; and that, at the time of that Resurrection, there will be a Day of Judgment, which will be followed by Retribution, according to the deeds done in the body. A Retribution, pursuant to the sentence pronounced at the time of the General Resurrection of the bodies of men, must be beyond this life, and it evidently behooves men to prepare for it.

The immortality of the soul may be made probable on philosophic grounds, and has been held by many of the heathen. But the Resurrection of the Body is purely a matter of revelation. The utmost that philosophy can do is to confute objections, and prove that, for anything that we know, the bodies of men *may* be raised from the dead. Positive proof that they *will* be raised, must come wholly

from the word of God. Nearly all that can be done without impropriety, is to select and arrange appropriate texts, so as to show what the Bible teaches. If it can be shown that the Scriptures foretell a General Resurrection, a General Judgment, and a Retribution after that Judgment, then, the theory which justifies the neglect of the soul's future welfare will be demolished, and all who receive the Bible as the word of God, must acknowledge that they ought now to be diligent in preparing for another life. This will be attempted in the following pages.

One of the chief obstacles to be encountered in this attempt, is the notion that the Resurrection is impossible; that when a human body is once really dead, it can never be made alive again. This objection, probably, presses upon the minds of many, when contemplating the General Resurrection, who never think of it in connection with the resurrection of Christ. If they believe that he was really dead,—as dead as any other dead man,—and that he really rose from the dead,

then they must admit that the resurrection of the dead is not a universal impossibility. To raise a body which has been dead three days, evidently requires a special exertion of divine power; and none who admit that such a resurrection has taken place, will deny that the power of God is equally able to raise a body that has been dead four days, or four thousand days or years; and that, notwithstanding all the dispersion of its parts, which the providence of God may have permitted. If, then, God has raised the body of Christ from the dead, the objections of philosophy must cease, and we have only to learn from the Bible, whether God intends to raise others also. It appears desirable, therefore, to bring distinctly before the reader's mind, the Scripture testimony concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

THE Resurrection of Christ implies, first, that he was really dead, and secondly, that his body was afterwards made alive. On each of these points, the testimony of Scripture is unequivocal and abundant.

1. *Christ really died upon the cross.*

When taken down, he not merely seemed to be dead, but was really dead. It was not mere fainting. It was not a case of suspended animation. It was actual death, such as others suffer who die on the cross. The evidence of this is conclusive.

Christ predicted that he should die. Mat. 16: 21. "From that time forth, began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must

go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." The reality of his death, too, is implied in all those passages where he foretells his Resurrection. Mat. 17: 9. "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." Mat. 26: 32. "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." The predictions were—not that he should recover from a state of apparent death, but that he should rise from the dead; which certainly implies that he should really be dead. The Evangelists evidently believed that these predictions had been fulfilled.

The apostles, in their preaching and correspondence, spoke habitually and decidedly of his death, as an undoubted matter of fact. Acts 2: 23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts 3: 14, 15. "But

ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead." Rom. 14: 9. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived; that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Rom. 5: 6, 8, 10. "In due time, Christ died for the ungodly."—"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—"We were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son." Rom. 6: 3. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death?" Philip. 2: 8. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Heb. 2: 9. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." But such expressions are too numerous to quote. They are frequent throughout the New Testament; and they teach, unequivocally, that Christ really died.

The Evangelists all testify expressly, that he died on the cross. Mat. 27: 50. "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." Mark 15: 37. "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost." Luke 23: 46. "And having said thus, he gave up the ghost." John 19: 30. "He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

His enemies testified that he was really dead. Mat. 27: 62, 63. "Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the Chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again." This language shows that they believed him to be dead when they uttered it.

His friends also believed that he was dead. Therefore Joseph of Arimathea requested his body for burial, in which he was assisted by Nicodemus. These were men of wealth and influence; judicious, well-informed men, who would not easily be deceived. It cannot be

supposed that they went through the whole process of entombment, without ascertaining the truth. The Galilean women who beheld his burial, believed him to be dead, and prepared spices for more perfectly embalming him after the Sabbath. The slowness of his disciples to believe that he was alive, after he had appeared to some of them on the third day, proves their strong conviction that he was really dead.

The fact of his death was officially reported to Pilate. Mark 15: 42—45, we are informed that when Joseph of Arimathea requested the body of Jesus for burial, Pilate called the centurion, "and asked whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph." If the friends of those who are condemned to death might obtain their bodies by just asking for them and saying that they were dead, the way would be open for innumerable frauds. It behooves the magistrate, therefore, to be sure that sentence of death is really and fully executed. Of this, Pilate was evidently

aware. Perhaps thinking it possible, from the shortness of the time during which Jesus had hung upon the cross, that he had only fainted, he formally investigated the matter, and ascertained that he was really dead. Whether the centurion, on being questioned, went to the cross and returned, does not certainly appear. Probably, he did not. According to John 19: 31—33, the Jews had requested that the legs of the crucified might be broken, and their bodies removed before the Sabbath. This was done with respect to the two thieves; but when the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was dead already, and brake not his legs. Joseph's application to Pilate, and the examination of the centurion, were after this; and probably the centurion's answer was founded upon the examination made by the soldiers at this time. We have, then, the verdict not only of the centurion, but of the whole band of soldiers engaged in the crucifixion, and who were so confident of the reality of his death, that they ventured to omit breaking his legs, as they had been

ordered to do on the supposition that he might still be alive; and this, in the presence of a multitude of his Jewish enemies, who would by no means have consented to the omission, or been silent about it, had they not known that he was really dead.

One circumstance attending this examination by the soldiers is worthy of special notice. John 19: 34, 35. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; but one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." The apostle shows his sense of the importance of this fact, by the remarkable attestation which immediately follows. "And he that saw it, bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." On this effusion of blood and water, Bloomfield judiciously remarks: "The earlier commentators in general regard it as miraculous; but the researches of modern surgery have established the fact, that the effusion would have taken place in any case, being the

natural consequence of such a wound; and is, under all the circumstances, decisive evidence of the actual death of Christ. Medical writers are, indeed, not quite agreed whether by *blood and water* be meant the small portion of water found in the pericardium, called *lymph*, or (which is more probable) the sanguineous and aqueous liquor found in the cavities of the pleura after a mortal wound, or that follows a stab in the pleura, when the *pericardium* has been pierced, *which is always mortal;* consequently, a proof that if Christ had not been already dead, this wound would certainly have extinguished the last remains of life; which was doubtless the intent of the soldier."

The adversaries of the apostles virtually admitted the reality of his death, when they had the strongest possible inducements to deny it. When it had become notorious that his body was missing from the sepulchre, and the apostles were proclaiming his resurrection, and multitudes were daily admitting its reality and becoming his followers, nothing could have answered their purpose so well as a

prevalent doubt whether he had really been dead. If they could have made the story appear at all plausible, that he had only fainted on the cross, and afterwards revived, immense numbers would have been satisfied with it, and would have been kept from joining themselves to his disciples. But they never even hinted such a suspicion. Instead of it, they circulated the story that his disciples had stolen away his body; they arrested and imprisoned the apostles, and forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus. Their whole conduct shows that they well knew the reality of his death to be too notorious to be denied.

But enough under this head; especially as additional proof will come before us, while considering the next.

2. *The body of Christ was raised from the dead.*

It is admitted by all parties, that on the morning of the third day after his crucifixion, the body was missing from the sepulchre where it had been placed. How shall we account for its absence? Was his body stolen

by his disciples, or was it raised from the dead?

If the disciples stole the body, they doubtless did it for the sake of making the people believe that he had risen from the dead, according to his own prediction. If they did this, they were dishonest men; they laid and executed a deliberate plan for deceiving the people; they knew that the story of his resurrection was a deliberate lie, of the worst kind, and for the worst of purposes,—the purpose of religious deception. If so, then doubtless God never "confirmed" their lying "word by signs following," and all they tell us of miracles, wrought in the name of Jesus, and in proof of his resurrection, is false; and all their assertions that they had seen him alive after his crucifixion, are also false. Certainly no one will take this ground, and still have the impudence to call himself a Christian. We are driven, therefore, to the only remaining supposition—that he rose from the dead. Still, let us look at the positive testimony concerning his resurrection.

We learn from Mat. 27: 62—66, that the question of the continuance of the body in the sepulchre was not treated with neglect at the time. The Chief Priests and Pharisees were afraid that it would be missing. They feared, or pretended to fear, that his disciples would steal the body, and then say that he had risen. At their request, a guard of soldiers was set to watch the sepulchre, and the stone by which it was closed, was sealed, so that none could enter without breaking the seal, and thus leaving evidence of the intrusion. And here it is natural to remark, that the men who were so careful to guard against any appearance of his resurrection, would not fail to make sure of the reality of his death.

On the morning of the third day, the body was found to be absent. The disciples, who visited the sepulchre; the guard, who needed to produce the body as a proof of their own faithfulness, to screen themselves from punishment, and the Chief Priests, who were so anxious to have it as a proof that he had not risen, all concur in the fact, that the dead

body was not to be found. How came it to be absent? The Roman soldiers, who had been placed there on purpose to watch the sepulchre and to prevent any deception, gave two different accounts of the transaction. First, as we learn from Mat. 28: 11, they "showed unto the Chief Priests all the things that were done," as related in the beginning of that chapter; that "there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men;" and that afterwards the sepulchre was found to be empty. This Matthew gives as the true account. Whoever believes this, will believe that he rose from the dead. Afterwards, being hired with money and encouraged by promises of protection, they said, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." Certainly, if they were asleep, they did not *see* the disciples steal the

body, and could not know but that he had risen from the dead. And that Roman soldiers should sleep while on guard, the punishment for which was death; that the whole guard should fall asleep at once; that they should all sleep so soundly as not to be awakened by all the unavoidable noise of opening the sepulchre, rolling away the stone and carrying off the body; that having committed such a crime, they should all with one consent expose themselves to capital punishment by confessing it; that, when their unfaithfulness became known, the affair should be hushed up, and no punishment inflicted upon any of them; that the Chief Priests, who were so anxious to have them watch, should not insist on their punishment on learning that they slept; all this appears to be as much out of the ordinary course of events, as contrary to all our experience, and in short as much a miracle, as the resurrection itself. The fact that they were not punished, shows that the story of their sleep was known to be a fiction, invented to answer the purpose of

influential persons. If we had no other evidence, we should be compelled to believe the account given by the guard before they had been bribed.

But we have other evidence. "He showed himself alive" to his disciples, "after his passion, by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." During this period of forty days, he was seen at eleven different times. He was first seen by Mary Magdalene, Mark 16: 9, John 20: 1—18; then by several women, who had been at the sepulchre, Matt. 28: 9, 10; afterwards by two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and by Simon Peter, Luke 24: 13—31, 34; then again by all the apostles except Thomas, and a week after that by all the apostles, Thomas being present, John 20: 19—29. On both these last occasions, he showed the apostles his hands and his side, and on one of them, as we learn from Luke 24: 39, he said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh

and bones, as ye see me have." He appeared, as recorded John 21 : 1—23, to some of his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, where he ate with them. He was seen also by the eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed to meet them, Matt. 28 : 16—20. Paul records, also, 1 Cor. 15 : 6, 7, his appearance to above five hundred brethren at once, and again to James. Lastly, all the apostles, (1 Cor. 15 : 7,) saw him on Mount Olivet, where, (Acts 1 : 9,) "while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." Of the fact of his resurrection they proceeded to bear witness. They appointed Matthias, (Acts 1 : 22,) "to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Peter said to the Jews, on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2 : 23 and onward,) "Jesus of Nazareth, ye have taken,—crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." And he proceeded to show that David had foretold the resurrection of Christ. And he added, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." To the multitude who

came together when the lame man was healed, Peter said, (Acts 3 : 14, 15,) "But ye —killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." And to the rulers, on the next day, he declared that that miracle had been wrought "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead." And habitually, (Acts 4 : 33,) "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The recorded instances are altogether too numerous to be quoted in a work like this. Nor is there any need of it. Every reader of the New Testament knows, that it was the burden of their preaching.

And let us keep in mind, what they meant by the Resurrection of Christ. It was not merely the immortality of his soul; not merely that his soul existed and acted after the death of his body. They preached that the body of Jesus itself was raised from the dead, so that when the sepulchre was searched, the body was found to be absent. They preached that, after his death and burial, they

had seen his body alive, having flesh and bones, walking, conversing and eating with his disciples. They preached that they had seen this risen body ascend up from Mount Olivet, till a cloud received it out of their sight.

And they rested the claim of Christianity to be received as true, upon this fact; that the body of Christ, after it had been dead and buried, was made alive again. On this point, one remarkable passage shall suffice. 1 Cor. 15: 1—20. In this passage, Paul repeats the substance of the gospel which he had preached to the Corinthians, and by which, if at all, he tells them, "ye are saved." It was, "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve," and afterwards by other witnesses. "Now," he says, "if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is

Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished." Language could not declare more plainly, that if Christ had not really risen from the dead, then the gospel which the apostles preached was false; that believing it was vain; that those who believe it are not saved from sin; and that those who die expecting the salvation of which the gospel speaks, perish like other men; in short, that if the body of Christ was not raised, then the gospel is a fable, and its promises and hopes unworthy of confidence. Let no one, then, presume to call himself a Christian, who does not believe "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day."

CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION AND GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THE four following propositions may most conveniently be discussed simultaneously; as the proof of their truth rests mainly on the same texts.

1. *There will be a second coming of Christ.*

2. *At the second coming of Christ, the bodies, both of the just and of the unjust, will be raised from the dead.*

3. *The dead, when raised, will be judged according to the deeds done in the body.*

4. *At the judgment, some will be approved, and admitted to a state of happiness; and others will be condemned, and sentenced to a state of misery.*

If these propositions are true, then this life is not the only scene of punishment for those who persevere in sin; but there is a state of retribution after death, for which it behooves us to prepare.

The great difficulty to be overcome, in establishing the truth of these propositions, is the notion that the resurrection of the dead is impossible. That the soul is immortal, and that it will exist, and be happy or miserable after death, most men find little difficulty in believing. But the Resurrection of the Body appears to many impossible, and the belief of it absurd. Hence they conclude, if they receive the Scriptures as true, that those passages which seem to speak of it, really mean something else. Such views were entertained by some members of the church at Corinth, and Paul occupies the whole of the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to that church, in confuting them. Let us consider his arguments in their order.

First, addressing them as professed believers, he reminds them what the gospel is.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you; unless ye have believed in vain." That which he was about to declare unto them was not some unimportant circumstance of the gospel, but that very essential truth, by which, if at all, they were to be saved. That truth he proceeds to state. "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve; after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep; after that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles; and last of all he was seen of me also." The death of Christ for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection from the dead, are then the essential, saving truth

of the gospel. They are, substantially, the gospel itself; and every one who professes to believe the gospel, thereby professes to believe them.

He then proceeds to show how absurd it is, for a professed believer in Christianity to say that the dead never rise. "Now, if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead," that is—if the dead never rise; if the resurrection of the dead be impossible or absurd—"then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished." Christ was really dead; and if the dead never rise, if the

rising of the dead be an impossibility, then Christ is not raised; he is still dead, and can do no good to them that believe on him; our testimony concerning him and concerning God is false; we have been deluding you with a vain hope, and those who have died expecting salvation through Christ, have perished. Such is the argument of Paul, and it is overwhelmingly conclusive. Let no one, then, pretend to be a Christian, and still deny or doubt the possibility of the resurrection of the dead. Give up that objection, or cease to pretend that you believe the gospel. Admit that the doctrine of the resurrection is free from absurdity, and may be believed on suitable evidence of its truth, or reject the gospel as a fable, and denounce the apostles as "false witnesses of God." Let your mind dwell on this point, till you come to some certain, definite and settled conclusion, by which you will abide, and which you will dare to avow. Think upon it, till you decide whether you will admit this doctrine, on which the truth of Christianity depends, or be an infidel, outright and openly.

If you determine, fully and finally, to be a Christian, and not an infidel; if you admit that Christ was raised from the dead, and therefore, that the resurrection of the dead is not impossible, you will bow to the authority of the apostle, while he sets forth the truth which he had been commissioned from on high to teach. He proceeds: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." Lazarus and others had been miraculously raised to a continuance of this mortal life; but Christ was the first who rose from the dead to an immortal life, and was therefore the first fruits, the pledge of the coming harvest. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5: 12. Death, therefore, entered into the world by means of Adam. So Christ was the first who rose from the dead, and by his means all men

shall rise from the dead. The apostle continues: "But every man" shall be raised "in his own order. Christ, the first fruits," is raised already; "afterwards, they that are Christ's" shall be raised, "at his coming. Then," when Christ's friends are raised, "cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." The Savior himself teaches us, John 5: 22, 27—29, that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;—and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." He adds: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." This kingdom, this special commission of authority to the Son, Paul informs us, shall terminate at the Day of Judgment; but not before. "For he must

reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The force of this expression is seen, by comparing it with Josh. 10 : 22—25. "Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me, out of the cave. And they did so.—And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong, and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight." Placing the feet upon the neck of an enemy was token and proof of entire conquest over him, so that he could no longer resist, but must perforce endure, however unwilling, whatever the conqueror should see fit to impose upon him. So, in Psalm 110, which Christ (Mat. 22 : 43, 44,) applies to himself, we read, "The Lord said unto my

Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "He must reign," therefore, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet;" till "the kings of the earth" shall no more "set themselves," nor "the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us brake their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;" for "the great day of his wrath" shall have come, and their heart can no longer endure, nor their hands be strong; but, standing "speechless" with conscious guilt before their Judge, they shall be "cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Nor will this victory extend to human enemies only. Every thing that opposes the designs of Christ and the highest felicity of his people, shall be subdued. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death," which, by detaining the bodies of the saints in the grave, stands in the way of their most perfect state of enjoyment. But even this shall be vanquished, and the prey shall be rescued from his grasp by the Resurrection.

After speaking more fully of the surrender of "the kingdom" to the Father, and of the tendency of the doctrine which he is opposing, like other "evil communications," to "corrupt good manners," the apostle returns to consider more particularly the objection of the philosophic Corinthians. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" When the body has been decomposed, and mingled with common earth; when parts of it have fertilized the fields, grown up into vegetables, been devoured by animals, and become, by digestion, a part of their bodies, and perhaps of the bodies of other men, how can it be raised? How can that body be recovered and reconstructed? This is the great objection; the main hindrance to the reception of the doctrine. The apostle has already shown this objection to be unchristian. He now proceeds to show it to be unphilosophical. "Thou fool! That which thou sowest, is not quickened, except it die." The death of a body, its decomposition and the dispersion of its elements, do not annihilate

the principle of life. On the contrary, when the seed has come to its full maturity, it ceases to grow; and you must bury it in earth, and it must be decomposed and suffer the dispersion of its elements, that it may be "quickened;" in order that the living process may be started anew, and may go on. "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." This translation, though perfectly correct, is not so clear to some readers as it might be. The meaning is, that in sowing, you do not put into the earth the future plant, but a "bare grain," a naked seed, whether of wheat, or barley, or any other plant; and God gives to this seed, by means of its death and decomposition, a continued living existence in the plant that springs up from it. "And to every seed his own body." The living principle which was in the former plant, which was arrested and ceased to act, but not to exist, in the seed when it came to maturity, lives again

in the future plant, which is indeed the dead seed raised to life again, and living anew in a body properly "its own." We may not infer, owever, that the resurrection of the human body is *in all respects* like the germination and growth of plants from the seed. Yet they are alike *so far as relates to this objection.* In both cases, the death and decomposition of the body are not only consistent with its future life, but are the natural and ordinary preparation for it.

More effectually to remove the difficulty, the apostle goes on to show, that the body, after the resurrection, though it still retains its identity, differs in some important respects from the body as it was before death. In order that the body be the same, it is not necessary that the same particles of matter should compose it. Physiologists tell us, that the particles which compose our bodies are continually passing off by insensible perspiration and in other ways, and that our food supplies other particles that take their places; so that all the particles in our bodies are

changed, some say as often as once in seven years; and yet our bodies remain the same. There is a story of a ship, from which defective pieces were removed and sound ones substituted for them, till not a timber or a bolt remained that was in her when new; and yet she was still the same ship. And every one may see that her masts and sails might have been taken away, and boilers and engines and wheels might have been added, and she might have become a steam ship, and still she would have been the same ship. She would have had a continued existence, corresponding, in all essential points, to the same idea. Still less could we doubt its identity, if it were a living ship, moving according to its own will, and if we knew its motions to be guided and governed by the same intelligent soul, during and after all its changes. So the numerous and important changes that take place in the human body, do not destroy its identity. At first, it was "made in secret," and the eyes of God beheld its substance, "yet being imperfect;" and according to his

design all its members "in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them." Afterwards, it saw the light, acquired the use of its senses and powers, and grew up to maturity. Then it decayed and died. Now it lies in the grave. As in the first stage of its existence, it is removed from human observation, and is undergoing changes of which it, apparently, knows nothing. During all these changes, it has been and still is the same body. At the last day, it shall a second time come forth from darkness to light; again wake to consciousness and voluntary action, having undergone still other changes, such as are needed to fit it for its new condition. Yet, after all its changes, it will still be the same body. The apostle illustrates: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another

glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." It is not necessary, therefore, that our future body, to be real, should be just like that which we have on earth. The analogy of the universe rather teaches us to expect, that while it will be a real body, it will be modified, to adapt it to its new condition. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It [the body] is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it [he is speaking of the resurrection of the saints,] is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." And his whole reasoning teaches us, the natural body may become a spiritual body, and still retain its identity.

Then, after showing that, as we have had earthly, corruptible bodies, like Adam, we must, in order to enter heaven, have heavenly, incorruptible bodies, like Christ, he adds: "We shall not all sleep, [for the death of

Christians is often called *sleep*,] but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; (for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed:) for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Here, the scoffer whose wit is profane enough for such uses, may jest at the idea of the trumpet; but, whether its sounding be literal, or whether it be figurative, alluding to the mode of calling men before human tribunals, he will be sober when it sounds. The honest inquirer after truth will easily understand the apostle's meaning. As our present bodies have need of means of support drawn from the earth; as they are, from their very structure, subject to pain from natural causes, to decay and death, they are not adapted to our condition in another world. Therefore, at the time when all men are called to judgment, the dead shall be raised with spiritual bodies, not capable of decay; and those of us who shall then be alive on earth, shall undergo a change, by which our

bodies also will become spiritual and incorruptible, fitted to the circumstances of the world in which we are then to live, and capable of enduring forever.

Thus we have all objections confuted; and we are taught that at a certain time, (which we know has not yet arrived,) the bodies of all the dead shall be raised, the friends of Christ shall be made glorious, and his enemies shall be trodden under his feet.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SAME SUBJECTS CONTINUED.

If we turn to other Scriptures, we shall find these truths confirmed, and other particulars added.

Philippians 3: 20, 21. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." That he should come from heaven, was foretold to his disciples, when they witnessed his ascension. Acts 1: 10, 11. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold! two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come,

in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." They saw him ascend, till "a cloud received him out of their sight." From that time forth, they expected his second coming; and one of them said, Rev. 1: 7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." And another wrote, Heb. 9: 27, 28, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." These passages evidently relate to the time spoken of in the chapter which we have been considering; when our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear the second time; when he shall change the "vile" bodies of his saints, both those who are in their graves and those who remain alive, and make them like the "glorious body" which he had after his resurrection; when their salvation shall be made complete; and when his

enemies, of every kindred on the face of the earth, shall be filled with consternation and with grief.

I Thess. 4 : 13 to 5 : 6. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord; that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [anticipate—come before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise, first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves

know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober." Here, again, the same scene is brought before us, with some additional particulars. Here is the second coming of Christ, the sounding of the trumpet, the rising of dead saints, and their union into one company with those remaining alive, while sudden and unexpected destruction, from which there is no escape, comes upon the careless. Christians, therefore, should not mourn for their brethren who sleep in Jesus, as the heathen mourn for their departed friends; but should look forward with joyful hope to the time of their triumphant meeting, at the second coming of Christ. Nor need they be informed of the precise time

when he will come; for, being children of the day, they are awake and prepared for it, and cannot be taken by surprise by it, as the careless children of the night will be, to their unavoidable destruction.

The apostle, writing again to the same church, adverts again to these transactions, and dwells more at length upon the doom of the wicked. II Thess. 1: 6—10. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." Here the destruction of the wicked is fixed at the time of the coming of Christ and the glorification of his saints. Passages formerly quoted show that these events will take place at the time of the resurrection.

II Pet. 2: 9 is evidently a parallel passage. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished." And II Pet. 3: 7. "The heavens and the earth which are now—are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Paul, in the passage last quoted from him, spoke of the time when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God," "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," when his saints are glorified. Peter speaks of the deliverance of the godly, and the reservation of the unjust to the Day of Judgment to be punished; and he tells us that the Day of Judgment is the day of the perdition of ungodly men, and that the present heavens and earth are reserved unto fire against that day. The deliverance, the fire, the punishment, the perdition, show that he spake of the same time of which Paul spake; the time of the second coming of Christ, and of the General Resurrection.

From a comparison of all these passages, it is manifest that, as Paul preached to the Athenians, Acts, 17: 31, God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Concerning that day, let us now hear the words of Christ himself.

John 5: 28, 29. Marvel not at this: [that is, at the spiritual resurrection, the regeneration, of the dead in sin, who shall hear the voice of the Son of God; which he has just mentioned;] for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." It is of no use for those, who, like Hymenæus and Philetus, (II Tim. 2: 18,) err concerning the truth, to say that *this* "resurrection is past already;" for it is a resurrection of "all that are in the graves;" a resurrection by which they "shall come forth" out

of their graves, and be no more found in them; which we know, or may know by opening graves and examining them, has not yet taken place. It is not a resurrection by which "they that have done evil" are raised to spiritual life, to holiness; but by which they only who have done good, and who therefore need no regeneration, are raised to life, while they that have done evil are raised to damnation. The "hour" of which our Savior speaks, is evidently the "Day of Judgment," mentioned by Peter, and the time of his second coming, which is predicted by Paul. The "voice," the presence of the Son of God, the resurrection of the bodies of all men, the ensuing blessedness and perdition, show that all are speaking of the same events. It is the day spoken of by Paul, Rom. 2: 5—8, as "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey

the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath." It is the day when "we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ," and "every one of us shall give account of himself to God;" when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Let us hear from the Judge himself, a more particular account of the transactions of that day.

Mat. 25: 31—46. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." He shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire. "And before him shall be gathered all nations;" for they that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. "And he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom

prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink." "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink."—"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous, into life eternal."

It is certain then, that, at some particular time which God hath appointed, Christ shall again be made visible to men; that, at that day, the bodies, both of the just and of the unjust, shall be raised from the dead; that all of us, even the whole human race, shall then stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and be judged according to our works; that some, who have done good, shall then be approved, and received to a state of happiness; and others, who have done evil, shall be condemned and punished. It is not true, therefore, that the Day of Judgment means every day of our lives,

one day as much as another; that this world is the only hell, and that there is no punishment after death.

It appears strange that any one should adopt this doctrine at all; and impossible that any one should adopt it considerately, and with a clear understanding of its whole force and meaning. Do those who say that this world, or the reproaches of conscience in this world, or the sum total of punishment for sin, internal and external, which every man receives as he goes along through life, is the only hell—do they really believe themselves to be now in the hell which the Bible describes? Do they believe that they are, from day to day, suffering as much on account of their sins, as, according to the Bible, the wicked will suffer in hell? Doubtless, some of them may be very miserable. Conscience, it may be, torments them exceedingly. Evil passions may rage, and ungratified desires may burn fiercely within them. Their minds may be "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt." But do they

indeed feel that they are cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth? Are they gnawed perpetually by the worm that dieth not, and burned with unquenchable fire? Are they now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Have they been driven away from Christ, accursed, into that everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels? Do they seem to themselves to dwell in a lake of fire, burning with brimstone? Are they conscious that they are now suffering the wrath of God, poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation? Surely, they do not mean to say all this of themselves. Such a description of the state in which their religion leaves them, would frighten all men from embracing it. And yet, if they do not mean all this and more, they cannot understandingly and truly say, that they believe themselves to be now in the hell which the Bible describes.

What then? Are they now in heaven? Is this world our only heaven, as well as our only hell? Have they finally overcome the world,

and sat down with the Redeemer on his throne of glory? Have they taken their place where nothing can enter that defileth, or worketh abomination, or loveth or maketh a lie? Have they arrived where sin and pain are unknown; where human labors, and human cares, and human infirmities, can find no admittance; where human relations have no place; where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God? Have their corruptible bodies put on incorruption, and their mortal put on immortality? Do they believe themselves to have become spirits of just men made perfect; shining as stars, and as the brightness of the firmament? Certainly, they will not pretend all this. Doubtless, they hope for a better, a holier and happier heaven than they now enjoy.

What, then, is their condition? If neither in heaven nor hell, where are they? Are they settled in neither, and do they spend their time in quick transitions from one to the other, being in heaven when they do right, and in hell when they do wrong? Do they

leap, many times in a day, across that "great gulf," which divides the blessedness of the righteous from the tormenting flame? No. Heaven is a state of permanent blessedness, from which those who have once entered, shall go no more out. And the smoke of the torment of those in hell ascendeth up for ever and ever; which means, according to the very lowest interpretation, that the visible indications of their torment are uninterrupted.

No. It cannot be, that men have adopted this doctrine considerately, and with a full understanding of its import. Their own consciousness proves it false. They know they are not in such a hell as the Bible describes. They know they never have been in it. They know their neighbors are not in it. They know, if they will stop and think soberly, that the men whom they see alive on earth, enjoying pleasure mingled with their pain, and sustained by hope, are not in the hell of which the Bible speaks. If, then, we believe the Bible, we must believe that there is such a

hell as the Bible describes, somewhere beyond this world.

And if not in this world, where and when will hell be found? Doubtless, when those that have done evil shall hear the voice of Christ, and shall come forth from their graves to the resurrection of damnation; when those who have never shown themselves the friends of Christ, shall be sentenced to depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, and shall go away into everlasting punishment; when those that obey not the gospel, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Dream not then, that the penalty of sin is only what you find it to be from day to day. Think not that you can persevere in sin so cheaply. Indulge not the tempting hope, that after the body is dead, no more pain can be inflicted upon you; but "fear Him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear Him."

CHAPTER V.

FINAL RETRIBUTION.

We have already seen, that God hath appointed a day, in which Christ will come again from heaven, the bodies of men will be raised, and men will be judged according to the deeds done in the body; when some will be approved and admitted to heaven, and others condemned and sentenced to the punishment of everlasting fire. Most who believe these truths, believe also that the judgment of that day will be final; that the sentence then pronounced, will fix each individual unchangeably in a state of happiness or misery.

And it is natural that it should be so. All the circumstances of that transaction look like the grand closing up of the affairs of the hu-

man race. The Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied with all his holy angels, descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; they that are in the graves, hear his voice and come forth; the dead are raised incorruptible, and the living are changed; all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and every one gives an account of himself to God; the Judge separates the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; the righteous are called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world, and they enter into eternal life; the wicked are sentenced to depart accursed into everlasting fire, and they go away into everlasting punishment; the heavens pass away, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and the works that are therein, are burned up. Who can believe that this settlement of the affairs of the world is not final? Every thing is attended to. All the individuals of the human race, small and great, are brought to their account. Every work of

every one of them, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil, is brought into judgment. The righteous judgment of God concerning every man is revealed. Sentence is publicly pronounced on every one, according to his works, and that sentence is executed. Certainly, this has every appearance of a final settlement of human affairs.

If any maintain that this Judgment is not final; that, after this, God will grant offers of mercy, and means of grace, and gracious influences, and change of character and condition; it is incumbent on them to show some authority for such a belief. They are bound to show some promise, that these favours will continue to be granted after the Day of Judgment. But this they cannot do. The fulfilment of every promise, except that of the permanent blessedness of the righteous, is fixed, either at that day or at some previous time; or it is not fixed at all, but left indefinite, without any intimation that it shall extend beyond that day. The expectation, therefore, of a day of grace after the Day of

Judgment, has no foundation in any promise of God; and nothing can be more madly presumptuous, that to let such a hope encourage us to neglect the needful preparation to meet our God in peace.

But this is not all. We are expressly told that the mediatorial reign of Christ shall end at the Day of Judgment. Having died for our sins according to the Scriptures, been buried, and risen again the third day, God hath exalted him "to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins;" and having sat down on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens, he sends the Comforter, he sheds forth the Holy Ghost, according to his promise, to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to sanctify them that believe, and prepare them for heaven. And he must reign, till his work is accomplished; till he has perfected the salvation of his friends, and put all enemies under his feet. "Then [I Cor. 15: 24—28] cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God,

even the Father.—And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Here, evidently, the period terminates, in which salvation through Christ is offered to sinners. He no longer reigns as a Prince and a Savior, to shed forth the Holy Spirit, and to give repentance and remission of sins; regenerating influences will cease, and he who is then unholy, will be left to be unholy still. That time will be, as every thing pertaining to it shows, the grand closing up, the final settlement of the affairs of the human race.

But, besides all this, we are expressly told, and repeatedly, that the judgment of that day shall be final; that every one shall remain, permanently, in the condition to which the decisions of that day shall assign him.

Mat. 25: 46. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." It is a poor and unlearned quibble, to say of this text, that the punishment of the wicked is not said to be

"eternal," like the life of the righteous, but only "everlasting," and that everlasting does not last forever. In the original Greek, there is no opportunity for such a quibble. There, the same word—the same, to a letter—is used in both cases; and in our English translation, though different words are used for sound's sake, the meaning is the same. It means that the decision, in respect both to the righteous and the wicked, is final, fixing each one permanently in that state for which his works have prepared him.

I Thess. 4: 16, 17. "The dead in Christ shall rise, first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Compare this with II Thess. 1: 9—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Here too, the decisions of the Judgment are represented as final; and as equally so with respect to the righteous and the wicked. The one shall be "ever"

with the Lord; the other "shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

So also, passages which speak not of the Day of Judgment, but of the states into which men are brought by the decisions of that day, represent those states as unchangeable.

Rev. 3: 12. "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

Mark 9: 43, 44. "And if thy hand offend thee, [lead thee into sin,] cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Here observe, that the perpetuity of the instruments of torment, the fire and the worm, is adduced us as a reason for cutting off the hand, rather than to be led into sin by it. But how can the eternal existence of the instruments of torment be a motive with us, if we are in no danger of being eternally tormented by them? What is it to us how long

the fire may burn and the worm may live, if after a time we are to be wholly freed from their influence, and even from the fear of them? And how could the Savior call it *my* undying worm, and that for the very purpose of alarming me, if I am in danger from it only for a time? Evidently, he intended to represent endless torment from that fire and that worm, as an evil against which we need to guard, by abstaining from sin. To say that there is no such thing as endless torment, and therefore no need of guarding against it, is virtually to charge him with either mistake or insincerity.

Other texts might be quoted, showing the perpetuity both of the happiness and of the misery that succeeds the Day of Judgment. But it is needless. Those who are not convinced by a single plain declaration of the word of God, would not be convinced by ten, or ten thousand. One more class of texts, however, deserves especial notice.

Mark, 3: 29. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never

forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." If the sin is never forgiven, surely the sinner can never be saved. The condemning sentence, therefore, in the case of such a man, must be final. His "damnation" must be "eternal." His "danger" is that of an offender whose crime is known; who cannot escape from the officers of justice; who will certainly be arrested, convicted, and sentenced to punishment; and who certainly will not be pardoned. The punishment of which he is thus "in danger," is "eternal damnation." If it were possible to doubt in what sense this damnation is to be eternal, the fact that the blasphemer "hath never forgiveness" would dispel that doubt. The damnation is a condemning sentence, from the effects of which no pardon will ever release the condemned. He must "go away into everlasting punishment."

Mat. 12: 31, 32. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whoso-

ever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This is another account of the same conversation. The words are somewhat different, but the sense is the same. In Mark we read, that the blasphemer "hath never forgiveness;" in Matthew, that the blasphemy "shall not be forgiven;" and, as if the Savior foresaw and would guard against all possible cavils, it is added, "it shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Heb. 10: 26—29. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of

God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" It is the work of the Spirit of grace, the Holy Ghost, to "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" to bring home to men's understanding and consciences, the truth concerning sin and salvation. His influences impart to men "the knowledge of the truth," and of their obligation to obey it. If, after this, they "sin wilfully," they cannot "obtain mercy" as Paul did, because they "did it ignorantly and in unbelief,"—for they did it knowingly; nor can the Savior pray for them as he did for his murderers—for they "know" very well "what they do." They resist Christ, and tread under foot the Son of God, knowing who he is; and thereby they "do despite to the Spirit of grace," who has imparted that knowledge to them. "There remaineth," therefore, to them, "no more sacrifice for sins;" no more offers of salvation through the Redeemer whom they "have trodden under foot." But, instead of the gracious

offers of the gospel, there remains to them "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," when God shall render "unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath." The convicted despiser of Moses' law died without mercy. Still less shall mercy be shown to the deliberate despiser of the gospel. He "hath never forgiveness." It is not safe for us, therefore, to "sin wilfully," trusting that if we neglect to obtain forgiveness "in this world," we may still obtain it "in the world to come."

Those who "do despite to the Spirit of grace," will doubtless be judged, with all others, at the last day, "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." They will be convicted of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and their sentence will be "eternal damnation." To them, the judgment of that day will be final. And if final to them, shall it not be so to all? Will there be a probation after judgment for some,

and not for others? The Bible contains no hint of such a distinction among those whom the Judge will place on his left hand. They all will be sentenced to "depart, accursed, into everlasting fire," and all "shall go away into everlasting punishment." The decisions of that day are equally final to them all. When Christ shall have delivered the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall no longer sit upon his mediatorial throne as a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins; when the dead shall have been raised and the living changed, and all men shall have been judged according to their deeds; when the world shall have been burned up, the righteous received to heaven, and the wicked cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; then probation will have ended, the affairs of the world will be finally settled, and each one of the human race will be permanently fixed in the condition of bliss or woe, for which his life on earth shall have prepared him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

Will any, with these declarations of the word of God before them, dare to neglect preparation for the Judgment while they live, hoping to attend to it in the grave? It would seem impossible for such rashness to find a place in any heart; and yet, as men are sometimes content with strange apologies for what they wish to do, it may be well to consider, more particularly than has yet been done, whether preparation for heaven may be safely deferred till after death.

Let us keep distinctly in mind, the question we are to examine. We have seen that at some future time, there is to be a General Resurrection, and a General Judgment, fol-

lowed by Final Retribution. Those whom the Day of Judgment finds unprepared, must then "go away into everlasting punishment." In this life, God gives us the means of grace, offers us pardon through the blood of his Son and the saving influences of his Spirit, and urges us to accept his offered mercy. May we safely put off the acceptance of that mercy till we are dead, trusting that these offers will be continued and that we shall accept them between death and the Judgment?

Let us remember that our all is at stake. If we neglect to prepare for heaven before we die, and if there should be no opportunity for preparation in the grave, our souls must be lost —lost forever. It would be better, infinitely better for us never to have been born, than to live and die unprepared for heaven, trusting to a future probation which we shall never see. A concern of such tremendous importance ought not to be deferred, unless we have the most conclusive proof that there will be another season in which we can attend to it. What, then, can we prove concerning it?

It is certain that, if there be such a second probation, some will neglect that opportunity to prepare for the Judgment, as well as this; for that day will find them still unprepared, and they will therefore be sentenced to "depart, accursed, into everlasting fire." That second probation, then, if there be a second, will not be a certain remedy for sin, sure to save all who waste the present. It will, like the present, be an opportunity that may be wasted, and that some will actually waste, as they do that now granted them. Either there will then, as now, be temptations to neglect the soul and persevere in sin; or the state of men's souls will be such that some will sin without temptation. There appears no reason to expect that those who waste their first probation, will make any better use of the second, if a second be granted them. It is dangerous, then, to die unprepared for the Judgment.

It is also certain, that to a part of the human race, no second probation will be granted. Some, as we have seen, I Thess. 4: 15, will be "alive and remain unto the coming of the

Lord." So Paul says, I Cor. 15: 51, 52, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." And Peter, preaching to Cornelius and those that were in his house, said of Christ, "It is he, which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [of the living] and dead." And Paul, again, II Tim. 4: 1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word." And in I Pet. 4: 5, we are told that the licentious and idolatrous heathen "shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." Those, then, who "are alive and remain" at the day of Judgment, will not die, as men now do. They will "be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." They will then be judged, with all others, "according to their works;" and that judgment, we have seen, is final. It settles their condition forever. There is no time in which they can enjoy a second probation, between death and

judgment. With them, this life is the only time to prepare for the retributions of eternity.

Nor will there be any second probation for those who have committed the unpardonable sin. That sin "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Their probation—the time in which their preparation for heaven is possible—ends when they commit that sin. From that time forth, even though they continue to dwell among men on earth, and no visible mark of reprobation distinguish them from other men, yet their irrevocable doom is sealed; their final ruin is certain.

And this consideration should especially alarm those who deliberately put off repentance while they live, hoping to attend to it when they are dead. They know that they ought to repent. Their intention to repent in another world, shows that they know it. They deliberately put off till after death, that repentance for sin which they know to be their duty. They deliberately persevere in that sinful course, of which they know they ought to repent, and of which they intend to repent in

another world. Do they not, then, "sin wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth?" It may be improper for others to pronounce, concerning any one of them by name, that he has committed the unpardonable sin; but it is certainly dangerous for any one to sin deliberately, intending to repent of it after death. In every such case, there is awful reason to fear that the sin is unpardonable.

And it is certain that the second probation of some, if they have a second, will be very short. They will have been in their graves but a year, a month, a day, or an hour, before the trumpet will sound, and they will be raised, and must come to judgment.

And if there be a second probation for any of the human race, it is certain that none of us can tell how short our own may be, or whether we shall have one. When the Resurrection and Judgment will come, we are not informed. We only know that day will come on those who are unprepared, like "a thief in the night;" that they will be expecting no such event, but will be saying "Peace and safety,"

and building and planting, and marrying and giving in marriage, when its destruction comes suddenly upon them. He who dares to neglect his soul now, believing that he can attend to it hereafter, if it needs any attention, is in the very state of mind in which the Judgment will find those who are not prepared for heaven. No impenitent man can know that he shall have a single year of probation after death, before the voice of the Son of Man will call him from his grave to judgment. He cannot even know that he shall die before that day. Perhaps he is one of those who will be alive when that day comes, and whose bodies will be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and made capable of burning for ever, without consuming, in "unquenchable fire." Even if Cain and Korah and Judas have had long probations after death, yours, reader, may be very short; or there may be no time before the Judgment, in which you can have a second probation.

Of what practical importance, then, is this question to a reasonable man? If the doc-

trine of a second probation were established by the most conclusive proofs, no one now living could be sure that he would have any part in it. It would then be certain that sinners of past ages might prepare for heaven between death and judgment; but whether we who are now alive, will have any such opportunity, would be wholly uncertain. Surely, no reasonable man will deliberately neglect his present opportunity to prepare for heaven, trusting to a probation after death, which he may never have; which, if he has it, may terminate very soon and very unexpectedly; and which, even if it be long, may not improbably be wasted like the present. Even if the doctrine were certainly true, it would still be very dangerous to die unprepared for the Judgment.

But is it true? What say the Scriptures?

The Scriptures habitually urge us to the performance of duty, in language which implies that our final condition will be according to our conduct in this life. Thus our Savior says, Mat. 5: 28, 29, "Whosoever looketh

on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." The impression naturally made by this passage, is, that those who are adulterous in this life, will be cast into hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." In Mat. 16: 27, to enforce the necessity of denying ourselves, and even laying down our lives on the cross, rather than desert his service, he says, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works;" that is, according to the works which he has done in this life. Mat. 25: 31—46, the Savior declares that some will be accepted in the Day of Judgment, "because I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink;" meaning, that they had done these things to some of his brethren. He tells us,

too, that others will be condemned to everlasting fire, because they had neglected to do these things for his brethren. Rom. 2: 1—10, we are cautioned against doing the evil which we condemn in others, because God "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." I Peter, 1: 17. "And if ye call on the Father, (who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work,) pass the time of your sojourning here in fear;" II Pet. 3: 10—13. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness;

looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God!" And verse 14. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless." And verse 17. "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, [of those that scoff at what the Scriptures say of the Day of Judgment, verses 3 and 4,] fall from your own steadfastness." But it is useless to multiply quotations. Every one knows that such is the habitual language of Scripture; and certainly, plain, honest readers must naturally understand it to mean, that the sentence pronounced upon us at the Day of Judgment, will be according to our conduct in this life. Indeed, it seems doubtful whether any one can put any other interpretation upon such language, without being conscious of making a dishonest effort to wrest its meaning. And if our condition after the Judgment is to depend on our conduct in this life, then there can be no second probation; no change be-

tween death and the Judgment, by which those who die impenitent may be prepared for heaven.

In strict accordance with this all-pervading doctrine of the Scriptures, is the representation given by our Savior, Luke 16: 19—31. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said,

Son, remember that thou, in thy life time, receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

It is unnecessary now to inquire whether this is a history, relating events that actually happened, or a parable, designed to illustrate important truths by setting forth events that might happen. In either case, it teaches the

doctrines which those events imply. The representation is, that before the General Resurrection, and while the rich man's brothers were yet alive, he was in torment, and Lazarus in a state of happiness; and that each was unchangeably fixed in his condition. According to this representation, the soul does not remain in a state of insensibility between death and the Judgment, but at death passes into a state of happiness or misery, according to its character, and continues in that state till it is re-united to the body at the Resurrection. The time between death and the Judgment, then, is not a time of probation, but of retribution. And this representation cannot be set aside as an unimportant circumstance, introduced into the parable for rhetorical effect, and from which no inference is to be drawn. It runs through the whole narrative, and is its most prominent thought. First, we have the different conditions of the rich man and Lazarus, and by implication, their different characters, in this life; then the account of their death, and the different conditions into

which death introduces them; then Abraham refers the rich man to their history in their life time, as a reason why their present condition should be as it is, and informs him that they are now effectually separated, so that there can be no passing from one state to the other; then the rich man begs that Lazarus may be sent to warn his brethren, whose day of preparation for happiness after death is not yet past; and Abraham replies, that the Scriptures give them all the instruction they need, and that those who disregard the Scriptures, would waste their probation and thus come into the place of torment, notwithstanding any warning that could be sent them. From beginning to end, in its total impression and in each of its parts, the narrative teaches that death is immediately followed by a state of retribution, and not by a second probation; that we must prepare for future happiness in this life, or not at all; that those who persevere in neglecting God and pursuing sinful pleasure while they live, are lost, forever lost. It is not safe, then, to calculate upon preparing for the Judgment after we are dead.

It is perfectly plain, that the Scriptures habitually represent this life as the season in which we ought to prepare for the Day of Judgment; that they urge us to use it for that purpose; that they discourage all hope of escaping perdition, otherwise than by faith and repentance in this life. And is not this enough? Has not God, in these exhortations and warnings, dealt honestly with us? Dares any one suspect that the impression which his words naturally make, is not according to truth, and that the fears which his warnings are adapted to excite, are groundless? When God warns us against a certain danger, shall not his warning be taken as sufficient proof of the reality of that danger? When he warns us to prepare in this life for the Judgment, shall we not believe that preparation in this life is necessary? Shall we subject him to a rigid cross-examination, like a witness whose fairness is suspected, and insist upon his telling us, in plain words, whether the truth is really as his exhortations seem to imply; whether the decisions of the Day of Judgment will

really be according to our conduct in this life? Even those who do thus, shall be met on their own terms.

II. Cor. 5: 10, 11. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The time when we shall "all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," is certainly the Day of Judgment, when he "shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another," and pronounce judgment upon them according to their characters, as described in Mat. 25: 31—46. It is the time mentioned in John 5: 28, 29, when they that are in the graves shall hear the voice of Christ, and shall come forth; "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." The text now before us asserts, that at that time every one shall "receive the things done *in his body*, according to that he hath done,

whether it be good or bad." The judgment of that day shall be, not according to what the soul has done after death, when separate from the body; but according to the deeds done while *in* the body. It contemplates no possibility that the soul, while *out* of the body, may have had a second probation, and by a wise and faithful use of it, have prepared for heaven. According as the things done before death, while in the body, have been good or bad, shall be the judgment of that day, and the retribution which shall follow. And so it shall be, not with some of the human race only, but with all; for "we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that *every one* may receive the things done in his body." It applies not merely to Christians, but to those whose works have been "bad," as well as those who have done "good."

And finally, if there were a second probation, who would consent to rely upon it? For what purpose of his own, can a living man desire to find that doctrine true? He who is willing to break off from sin and honestly en-

deavor to do his duty in this life, cannot possibly have any need of a second probation. It could be of no use to any human being, except those who persevere to the end of this present life in sin. Is that your desire? If so, you prefer sin, which is the spirit of hell, to holiness, which is the spirit of heaven. Ought you to be such a man? Is it right for you to desire the privilege of neglecting preparation for the Day of Judgment as long as you live? The man who desires to live in sin as long as he lives on earth, and therefore wishes for a second probation after death, is certainly a bad man. His general conduct may be decent, and even commendable in the sight of men; but in the sight of God, and of his own conscience, if he will seriously and honestly consult it, he is a bad man. If, with the heart he now has, he could enter upon a second probation, he would desire a third, that he might spend the second in sin; and then a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and so on without end. He would have the Day of Judgment postponed forever. He would never be willing that God should "judge the world in right-

eousness." His heart is at war with the government of God, because, under that government, those who choose to persevere in sin, will be judged at the Last Day, and "punished with everlasting destruction." He dislikes the severity of God against sin, and would have him more lenient, granting a second probation to those who love sin too well to forsake it during the present. Are you willing to be such a man? If you are, who can be more worthy of the worm that dieth not, and of the fire that never shall be quenched? Who can be more worthy of hell, than he who desires the privilege of sinning safely?

The hope, then, of a second probation for any of the human race, by means of which they may escape the doom for which their characters in this life have prepared them, must be given up. Those only who serve God in this life, may hope to reign with God in heaven; while those who live and die unbelieving and impenitent, must come forth out of their graves at the Last Day, "unto the resurrection of damnation." It is not safe, to

calculate upon making our peace with God after we are dead. Such an expectation and a corresponding life are not only unsafe, but inevitably destructive. Those who in this life hate knowledge and do not choose the fear of the Lord, but reject his counsel and despise all his reproof, "shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

We may, then, on the authority of the word of God, receive the following propositions as undoubted truth.

1. That Jesus Christ died,—really died,—for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

2. That, on the third day, he rose from the dead;—so rose, that his body, which had been dead, was no longer in the sepulchre where it had been laid, but was alive, and was seen alive "by many infallible proofs," at divers times, until he was received up into heaven.

3. That, at a day which God hath appointed, called in Scripture "the Last Day," the "Day of Judgment," and "the end of the world," he will come to judge the world.

4. That, at his second coming, the bodies of all the dead will be raised to life, and the bodies of all the living will be changed, so as no longer to be subject to decay and dissolution.

5. That all the individuals of the human race will then be judged according to the deeds done in the body; so that those who have done good in this life shall be approved and received to happiness, and others condemned and sentenced to a state of misery.

6. That the judgment of that day will be final; the wicked going away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Being thus warned of God concerning the things that are before us, it becomes us to prepare for them. The warning has been given in mercy, that we might be aware of our condition; that we might take warning, and watch and be sober, as men that watch for the coming of their Lord, lest that day should come upon us as a thief, and find us unprepared. It is not wise to disregard the warning. It is not wise to desire and search for means of doubting the fulfilment of that which the Lord hath

spoken. It is not wise, it is not respectful, it is not safe, for us to argue that the justice, or the goodness, or the mercy of God will not permit him to do that which he hath declared that he will do. God knows better than we do, what is consistent with his goodness, his mercy, and all his glorious attributes. It is not safe for us to neglect preparation for the Day of final Judgment, because we think that no judgment of God against sinners ought to be final. If any will have more confidence in their own reasonings concerning the duty of God, than in the declarations of God concerning what he will do, they must take the consequences. "He that reproveth God, let him answer it." But let all who know themselves to be fallible and believe that Christ spake the truth, take warning, and prepare to meet their God.

And be not afraid of losing earthly good. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their

worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

And say not, "To-morrow shall be as this day;" lest God should say, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee."—"For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Remember, it is while men are saying Peace and safety, that sudden destruction cometh upon them, which they shall not escape. "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

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